



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

Johnny Sutton, U.S. Attorney

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**BJARNASON SENTENCED TO FEDERAL PRISON
FOR THREATENING TO DESTROY ISLAMIC CENTER**

United States Attorney Johnny Sutton announced this afternoon that 30-year-old Jared Bjarnason of El Paso, Texas, was sentenced to 18 months in federal prison followed by two years of supervised release for threatening to destroy the Islamic Center of El Paso. In addition to the prison term, U.S. District Judge Frank Montalvo ordered that Bjarnason complete 150 hours of community service.

"There are no idle threats in the post 9-11 world. Mr. Bjarnason's threats will cost him his freedom," stated U.S. Attorney Johnny Sutton.

On September 30, 2004, Bjarnason pleaded guilty to one count each of sending a threatening interstate communication and making a threat against a religious property. Bjarnason admitted to sending an electronic mail message to the Center on April 18, 2004, threatening to burn down the Center's mosque if hostages held in Iraq were not released within three days.

During the investigation, the El Paso Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation used a provision of the Patriot Act which allows providers of electronic mail services to give electronic communications directly to agents "if the provider reasonably believes that an emergency involving immediate danger of death or serious physical injury to any person justifies disclosure of the information." Without the provision, agents would have had to obtain separate search warrants for each service provider engaged by the email transmission, a process which could have taken over 30 days. The Patriot Act enabled the FBI to assess the threat in near-real time.

Assistant United States Attorney William Lewis prosecuted this case on behalf of the Government.

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